



JAPUJI

The Crowning Glory of the Sikh Scripture
IN
ENGLISH POETIC RENDERING

PREFACE

My approach to the study of Religion on the comparative method that I had done to earn my second PhD on Guru Nanak Bani in 2000 is radically different from the work of scholars worldwide. They have created mountains of literature on the subject which, to my mind, has ended up confusing rather than clarifying fundamental principles that distinguish the Sikh Faith from other World Religions and together constitute many other forms of scholastic enquiry. This shortcoming is what impels me to share with the readers the findings of my doctoral research with a view to facilitating your understanding by orienting your mind from the prevalent interpretations of the Sikh scripture. This plethora of exegesis includes what I feel is the incorrect use of basic terminology, notably, the word ‘composition’ for Bani. *Bani* as a whole is Divine Utterance that was received in Revelation from time to time by the Sikh Gurus and the *Bhaktas* (devotees/worshippers) whose hymns are enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the Holy Book of the Sikh Faith.

Japuji or Japji (Sahib) is the sacred **description** (*not* ‘composition’) by Guru Nanak Dev (1469 – 1539 CE) of the **Revelation** that he had received, and that he used as the foundation for establishing the Sikh Faith for all Humanity, with Humility as its Cardinal Principle. The meaning and majesty of ‘Humility’ is enshrined in the term ‘Sikh’ used by Guru Nanak for the followers of the new religion. It means disciple, the eternal learner, of the *Guru* who alone has the divine power to remove the darkness of ignorance so that life here and now is lived according to the dictates of *Shabda* [the *revealed* Sacred Word], and not the human preceptor who, in all other religions, acts as mediator between the human seeker and God. The word ‘*Jap*’ means to ‘recite’/‘to chant’. ‘*Ji*’ is a word in Punjabi and Hindi languages that is used as a salutation of respect and reverence for the venerable. ‘*Sahib*’ is an Arabic word that means ‘Master’, ‘Lord’. The Holy Book of the Sikh Faith called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* begins with it, and the Sikhs call it *Bani* (sacred utterance). The western mind would translate it as the ‘Venerable Mr Book’ which, indeed, it is because the Sikhs worship it as the ‘Living Guru’.

Unlike what has been understood heretofore to be ‘philosophy’ is not *Bani*. Neither is it poetry, nor mythology, not even mysticism divorced from the rigour and regimen of workaday existence. To use the term ‘scientific’ as an alternative for researching Religion is equally misplaced and misleading. Science as a method and mode of apprehending phenomena or objective reality draws upon empirical evidence and that uses observation, hypothesis, measurement, and experiment in the laboratory to validate, verify, and authenticate it. Considered from this viewpoint, it is natural that all the instruments that Science has developed are actually extensions of the five human senses of sight, sound, olfaction, gestation, and tactility. All these are directed outwards and find and store data that has its origin in **Matter**. On the contrary, in the case of Religion, these senses are *internalized* by jettisoning their physical organs, namely, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. Religion has thus **Mind** as its Lab and firsthand Experience for its validation, verification, and corroboration. To my knowledge and experience, in Religion the sense of Sight [chief faculty that apprehends what we call Objective Reality] is overtaken by the sense of Hearing [chief faculty that uses consciousness to put the Mind in touch with the so-called Subjective Reality with its origin in Energy which is supernal. It is God’s divine power of Creation, Maintenance, and Destruction, *not* a variant of Matter as is recognised worldwide. I have dealt with these and many other problems that have found worldwide currency through the centuries, and become accepted as Gospel Truth despite the fact that, to my understanding, they are patently misplaced and misleading.

Let me dilate a little more on ‘Composition’, which, according to its literary connotations, is a creative work, especially as a poem or as a piece of music. The dictionary meaning of ‘Composition’ is the act of combining parts or elements to form a whole. In this sense, the resulting state or product is a ‘Composition’. An example of a Composition is a flower arrangement. An example of a ‘Composition’ is a manuscript. Expressed differently, ‘Composition’ is another word for writing—the act of writing or the piece of writing that results from it. It also refers to what something is made of. Writing classes are often called *composition* classes, and writing music is also called composition. These averments underscore the need for formal education, training, and practice over long periods of time; besides, an effort of will to ‘compose’ a verse rather than spontaneously utter it as something readymade received as it descended from up heavens. **My insistence on the subject finds its corroboration in Guru Nanak’s oft-quoted command as recorded in *Janam Sakhis* that are famous hagiographic accounts of many and varied anecdotes/episodes from the life of the Founder and the First Master of the Sikh Faith.**

Whenever Guru Nanak Dev felt that his soul is possessed by celestial stirrings caused by the Creator, he would tell his lifelong musical companion, “*Mardania, rabab chbeirh Bani aayi aa*” [O Mardana! Play the Rabab (Arabic word for a stringed musical instrument), the sacred word has arrived]. He would then break into a divine song on the spur of the moment. The paeans thus suddenly descended on him and spontaneously sung by him to the Glory of God to the accompaniment of *Rabab* would so charge the atmosphere with palpable vibes of divinity that even the birds, animals, and plants swayed in harmony to the captivating concordance of celestial music. In the light of this brief exposition, I strongly feel that “epiphany” *not* “composition” is the *correct* word for the *Bani* enshrined in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. An epiphany is an experience, notably, religious experience of a sudden and striking realization for which the Arabic word “*Ilham*” called Revelation in English offers the most befitting expression.

Japuji consists of the *Mool Mantar* (the seed-word) that is an opening *Salok* (verse-form conventionally used as a prologue and as an epilogue). 38 *Pauris* (literally, steps or stairs) or stanzas follow the opening *Salok*, and close with another *Salok*. *Japuji* is lovingly recited every morning with utmost

reverence by the Sikhs all over the globe. In my second PhD earned from the Panjab University in 2000, I carried out a study of *Japuji* deploying the tools and terminology of Architecture in which I was formally trained in 1960. It was an exhaustive investigation based on the comparative method covering all the major world religions: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam.

In the holy books of various religions only one language is used. *Jain* Prakrit is a term loosely used for the *language of the Jain* Agamas (canonical *texts*). Tripitaka is the *holy book of Buddhism written in Pali*. The Vedas are the holy books of Hinduism written in Vedic Sanskrit. The Torah, the holy book of Judaism, is written in Hebrew. Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, is written in the Avesta language. The Bible of Christianity is written in Hebrew. Arabic is the language of the Quran, the holy book of Islam. In sharp contradistinction, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikh Faith, the world's youngest religion, is written in the *Gurmukhi* (literally, from the Guru's mouth) script, in various languages, including Lahndi (Western Punjabi), Braj Bhasha, Kauravi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, and Persian with words from Arabic. These languages often have the generic title of *Sant Bhasba* (language of the saints) signifying that it does not belong to any one religion, but is universal and meant for the amelioration of the entire Humankind.

The understanding of the purpose, meaning, and message of *GURBANI* primarily demands full grasp of the terminology, metaphors, and allusions found in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This is because they have connotations and significance that defy what the best of dictionaries of various languages offers. Each word must, therefore, be understood in the context in which it appears in the Holy Book. No wonder, it impels a lifetime of reading and re-reading in rapt attention—a kind of Red-Alert Single-Mindedness. However, that rarest of rare moments can come about only when the Ego is obliterated and the Mind fully surrenders to the Sovereignty of the *Shabda*.

It is only then that the fortunate devotee attains *Vivek Buddhi* [Enlightened Intellect] in which are subsumed the four human faculties of Reason, Emotion, Imagination, and Intuition. Such an exalted state of Consciousness is *Guru-Mat* that transcends *Mann-Mat* which Guru Nanak has called *SAHJ* i.e., Unconditioned Spontaneity in which Thoughts, Words, and Deeds meld into *Karma* [Righteous Action Holistically Performed]. This is the perfect Environment of Spiritual Realities in which God's Edict-Fiat [*Hukm*] is realised through the Human Agency right in the midst of countless distractions of the World of Matter because then the Seeker, the Seeking, and the Sought are ONE Organic Whole.

At this juncture, it is necessary to emphasise that in Religion the original in scripture comes from Revelation and revelation alone. In all other forms, it is at best a commentary that is never free from the commentator's stance, sensibility, prejudices, notions, norms, and perceptions. This he does with unavoidable prejudice and bias in terms of his training and experience rooted in the exigencies of the World of Matter. That is the reason why I insist that to get firsthand understanding of the scripture of any religion you ought to learn the language in which it was originally written; then, read and absorb it yourself and, finally, to grasp its ultimate purpose see it in the light of your experience as it springs from workaday existence vis-à-vis the larger picture of global exigencies. This queer exercise you must conscientiously do before what you have read or heard gets absorbed in your being as a second nature (mis-)guiding you through the vicissitudes of life in the raw. Accepting the commentator's interpretation, however brilliant and regardless of his stature, is like eating the food chewed by him.

In my doctoral research, I had called *Japji* a “38-storey Skyscraper of the Soul” to underscore the oft-neglected fact that **Spirituality** as an indispensable means of religious growth is a vertical journey of the Consciousness (*Surj*) guided by the Revealed Word (*Shabda*) up the spinal column from the tail bone to the highest point in the cranial cavity. I am using the word ‘consciousness’ as the Mind's chief tool to apprehend experiences of a myriad kind in order to make sense out of them for the person's sensible living. In my considered opinion, *Oankar*, used in the *Mool Mantar*, is the explication of the Numeral One (‘1’ i.e. ‘Ik’) preceding it just as what follows is an exposition of the *Mool Mantar*. By the same token, *Japuji* elucidates the *Mool Mantar*, and *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (in 1430 pages) explains the *Japuji*.

Translation was not taken very seriously and never considered ‘creative’ until the English poet and writer Edward Fitzgerald (31 March 1809 - 14 June 1883) published his English translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (London, 1859). He did the job with such consummate exquisiteness and trans-cultural understanding of the Persian and English languages that translation thenceforth began to be acknowledged as a work of literary art. All sceptics and cynics were silenced to speechlessness so much that since then there has hardly been an anthology of English poetry that does not feature his translation of the quatrains originally penned in Persian by the world-famous astronomer-poet of Persia [modern Iran] Omar Khayyam.

As a teenager I was myself so deeply influenced by Omar Khayyam *via* Edward Fitzgerald' masterly and soul-stirring translation that I wrote scores of quatrains in English, to begin with. Later on, when I got interested in Urdu, I learnt the language, its poetry, prosody, and criticism so studiously that over the next 50 years I mastered the art to produce over 3,000 *Rubaiyat* under my pen-name [*Takballus*] *Tameer Chandigarhi* [which denotes an architect who lives in Chandigarh].

Chandigarh Sahitya Akademi [State-Level Academy of Literary Arts] has conferred on me the *Best Book of the Year 2019 Award* for my anthology of 1540 Urdu quatrains titled *Shu'oor-i-Bekbudi* [Knowledge of the Unconscious Self], and *Award of Recognition-2020* for Outstanding Contribution to English Literature/Language. The first award carried a Citation and Cash Prize of Rs 25,000.00, and the second award a Citation and Cash Prize of Rs 1, 00,000. Since 1969, I have made the architectonics of creation, criticism, and translation a habit of the mind—and translated a considerable body of poetry in Urdu and Punjabi into English and vice versa.

Poetic Rendering in English of Japuji that follows is the result of such an exercise which I keep doing as a delightful pastime with undiminished passion. Interestingly, translation prods me on to explore the languages concerned and delve beneath their obvious differences down to their cultural and artistic nuances steeped in cosmic correspondences. Such a self-assigned task has been deepening my understanding of the Sacred Word when the subject happens to be Religion, Spirituality, and Mysticism.

Let me hope that the translation given here in metered and rhymed verse gives my readers enough excitement to look at Guru Nanak *Bani* in a new light and with heightened creedal fervour—inspiring them to reorient their soul-consciousness [*Surj*] towards Spiritual Journey via the Sacred Word [*Shabda*].

—Dr SS Bhatti

MOOL MANTAR
[THE SEED-WORD]



[IK OANKAR]

G-O-D [Generator-Operator-Destroyer]

IS

ONE

All-Inclusive, All-Pervasive

Truth, the Unchanging Reality

Transcendent Being

One may Name Him thus

Intrepid, Uninimical

Imperishable Icon

Beyond the Cycle of Birth and Death

Self-Existent

By the Grace of God, the Guru

This Creed is proclaimed

*

Contemplating His Glory by a ceaseless Chant

**

Truth was He before the birth of Time

Truth has He been since Time He bore

Truth is He, Nanak, even now sublime

And Truth shall He be evermore

*

PAURI-ONE

A life-time of ablutions can't purify

Nor sustained spells of silence qualify

Nor endless feasting of the worlds satisfy

Nor a hundred thousand wits ever grasp it?

How, then, to be Truthful; this guile! How smash it?

Nanak, "Submission to His Edict-Fiat Who's Master of His Will"

Is the Inviolable Divine Writ, the one Revealed in Original!

PAURI-TWO

His Edict-Fiat bears forth bodies, yet inscrutable remain

His Edict-Fiat creates souls, and all status bestows

By His Edict-Fiat are high and low, pleasure and pain

By His Edict-Fiat one is set free, another comes and goes

By His Edict-Fiat is life's bondage for one and all

Those who know His Edict-Fiat, Nanak, are ego-free and humble

PAURI-THREE

Some who are so endowed, His might eulogise

For some adorners, His blessings are what His power symbolise

Some sing the praises of His beautiful virtues and traits

Many another through metaphysics His nature contemplates

Some sing of Him as the Author of life and death

Some admire His power of infusing into the dead new breath

Some sing of Him as the One so palpably near

Some sing of Him as He who is distant, unclear

There's no dearth of reckonings, or descriptions sane

Millions, nay, countless have tried but in vain

The Giver goes on giving, but out the takers tire

In aeons of births getting what all they desire

God runs the Universe by His Inexorable Decree

In joyous progression, Nanak, He—The Carefree

PAURI-FOUR

Unchanging is the Sire, True His justice, His language love infinite

We only ask and implore—and so graciously He gives it

What can we offer the Giver for a glimpse of His court

How prayers must be worded to melt His heart

Meditate on the True Name's glory in the ambrosial hours

Good deeds beget good life, but salvation His grace confers
The Omnipotent is All-Holy, Nanak avers

PAURI-FIVE

Who can make His idol, who knows the norm
He who's form, form-giver, yet beyond all form
For him, who serves Him, all honour ensues
Sing of Him, Nanak, that mine-field of virtues
Sing and hearken, and, in heart, a longing nurture
To let sorrows quit, and joys to enter
Guru's Word is the mystic sound, the Vedas: It's all-pervasive
Guru is God, Gorakh, Brahma, and Parvati: The Goddess
Even knowing it, I couldn't have this Truth vouched
How could the Ineffable in speech be couched
May I, with Guru's grace, be ever so blest
That this Benefactor-of-All I mayn't forget

PAURI-SIX

A holy bath takes he who earns His approval
Sans God's sanction, all actions are offal
Wherever, through all the worlds, have I sought
Sans good deeds, everything comes to nought
Gems and jewels in his mind can be found
If the seeker hearkens The Word's mystic sound
May I, with Guru's grace, be ever so blest
That this Benefactor-of-All I mayn't forget

PAURI-SEVEN

A life as long as Yugas four
Even ten times as much, if one were to get
In all the nine continents, be very well known
Had countless followers at one's behest
If one could earn a glorious name
And highest honour as one's asset
But if one were of His grace deprived
Hopeless, hapless, would one be, yet
One amid a swarm of wriggling worms
Forever confined to the filth of sin
Nanak, He alone bestows virtue on the virtueless
And endows the good with the wealth of goodness
Who can think of anyone who ever could
Bless the Lord Himself with immaculate good

PAURI-EIGHT

Hearkening bestows on the seeker all powers supernatural
Hearkening reveals the secrets of the earth, the sky, and the Mythical Bull
Hearkening unravels mysteries of isles, regions, nether lands
Hearkening death's invincible power disbands
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-NINE

Hearkening gives the devotee the formidable powers of Trinity
Hearkening, to the meanest, imparts Divinity
Hearkening reveals the praxis, body's secrets, and the power of Yoga
Hearkening equals the knowledge of Shastras, Smritis, and the Vedas
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-TEN

Hearkening unfolds the truth, knowledge, and bliss
Hearkening equals ritual bathing at sixty-eight holy places
Hearkening, all the honour of learning, begets
Hearkening, one always easily meditates
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-ELEVEN

Hearkening, one can through rivers of virtues wade
Hearkening, one is a *pir* or an apostle made
Hearkening, the blind find their path hurdle-free
Hearkening, they fathom life's abyss easily
Ever are His devotees, Nanak, in joyous progression
Hearkening destroys all their pain and sin

PAURI-TWELVE

Who can talk of the unique bliss of sound belief
All such trying shall always come to grief
Where is the paper, the scribe, and where's the pen?
The believer's state-of-mind beggars all description
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-THIRTEEN

Awaken'd are the believer's mind, intellect, consciousness
To the entire Cosmic Mystery does he gain access
The believer in his life never cuts a sorry figure
Nor does death even bother a staunch believer
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-FOURTEEN

The believer's path is from obstacles free
The believer shall be honoured exclusively
The believer is never in sects and cults stranded
The believer's faith is on Righteousness founded
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-FIFTEEN

The doors of deliverance on the believer open
The believer's kith and kin, too, get salvation
Safe the believer lands, and, with him, an entire congregation
When, from the cycle of births, the believer attains salvation
Holy is the Name of the Formless One
Believed by few, to fewer known

PAURI-SIXTEEN

Elect are they, among humans esteemed, who God prefers
And, in His court, on them, high honour confers
The God-loved are welcome at His door, and embellish His court
The True One is their Guru on whom they have set their heart
Man can't, do what he will, Creator's endless state fathom
His Creation will forever remain beyond him
On whose horns toils this earth, in *Dharma*, they say
God's-Mercy-Begot, does infinite contentment display
The truthful alone may this secret know eventually
That the Mythical Bull can't such staggering loads carry
When there are earths beyond earth, many more beyond this world
By whose power are they supported and into space twirled
A myriad species are there, and their countless aspects
Lord's ever-moving pen has scribed complete in all respects
Who can write, who, for this staggering count, account
Because most certainly this would be a mind-boggling count
No one knows the limit of His powers divine
How superb are all His forms sublime
A single Word and Lo! Myriads of worlds came into being
At His command rivers of life in millions started flowing
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to offer Thee a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable, Formless One

PAURI-SEVENTEEN

Countless recite His Name, and countless love Him
Countless adore Him, as countless penance
Countless from the Scriptures and the Vedas recite
Countless practise yoga, and remain saddened hence
Countless devotees on His Excellence-Omniscience meditate
Countless are pious souls, and countless in giving charity elate
Countless crusaders brave the arch-enemies' weaponry
Countless think in silence ceaselessly of Thee
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to offer Thee a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable, Formless One

PAURI-EIGHTEEN

Countless fools see but mindlessly
Countless thieves thrive on ill-gotten money
Countless despots with their might oppress
Countless cut-throats shed blood and suppress
Countless are the sinners who depart in sinning
Countless are the liars who're always lying
Countless perverts subsist on ill-pretence
Countless back-bite and burden their conscience
Nanak, the lowliest of all the known lowly
After deep thought makes this humble homily
I haven't got the power to fathom or surmise
Nor am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye Immutable, Formless One

PAURI-NINETEEN

Countless are Thy Names, Thy abodes countless
Countless are Thy realms impossible of access
Saying even countless is a burden like that of sin
Yet without words one can't Name Him, much less adore Him
Through words one gains wisdom, and sings of His mysterious ways
Through the language of words one writes and his ideas conveys
With words is destiny on everyone's forehead writ
But who could on the Divine writer's forehead write it?
As He ordains, so one's lot one would get
Over the whole expanse of creation extends His Name
Beyond His Name lies there not a single domain
I haven't got the power to fathom or to surmise
Not am I suited to Thee for a willing sacrifice
What Thou approve of is alone a worthy action
Changeless is Thy nature, Ye, immutable, Formless One

PAURI-TWENTY

Dirt-smeared hands, feet, or the body
Can be washed clean with water
And if it be soiled laundry
Clean would it with soap launder
But when the mind is with the filth of sins smeared
By the dye of God's-Name alone can it be cleared
Mere saying makes nobody a saint or a sinner
Deeds are man-making seeds whose account is kept by the Maker
One must reap as one sows
By His Edict-Fiat, Nanak, one comes and goes

PAURI-TWENTYONE

Pilgrimage, penance, mercy, and charity
Give him a whit of fruit—but how proud is he!
Who, hearkening, believes—and nurtures God's love
Taken in the mind a holy dip to cleanse the inner core
All virtues are Thine; no worth have I got
Yet, sans imbibing virtues, devotion is naught
Self-Existent are Thou, and, among Thy creation
Are Brahma, matter, and the Holy Word

Truth, Beauty, and Eternal Love are Thine
 Our salutations to Thee, O Immaculate Lord
 What time was it, which era, what day, and date
 Which season, which month, when the cosmos Thou did create
 The Puranas would this corroborative evidence bear
 If the Pundit has at all this secret known
 And the Qazi's knowledge in the Koran's exegesis find mention
 But the yogi, nor anyone else, knows the date, the month, or the season
 This exclusive secret is known, indeed, to none other than God
 The Lord-Creator of all creation
 How do I say it, how adore Him, how describe, how I know?
 There's no dearth of those, Nanak each cleverer than the rest
 Who claim to have this esoteric knowledge, though!
 Great is the Lord God, supreme His justice
 Whatever He ordains must come to pass
 Nanak, the egotist can only of this knowledge brag—at best
 But never shall he be welcome at His portals, alas!

PAURI-TWENTYTWO

Nether are the regions beyond numberless nether lands
 Countless are the skies beyond the heavens and The Sky
 Unfathomed is the depth of cosmos, unmeasured height
 The Vedas have in reckoning tired and so have I
 The Semitic texts speak of eighteen thousand spheres
 Yet point to one basic truth this paltry count must
 Everything springs from His Being—which, un-reckoned, one again swears
 Then, in a state of utter helplessness, returns to dust
 Therefore, Nanak, suffice it to say that all human futility shows
 That He is great—yes, but how great? —God alone knows

PAURI-TWENTYTREE

Adoring Him, as they do, the devotees are yet ignorant of His glory
 Can the rivers fathom it as they trail back into the sea
 Holding mounds of wealth and dominions vaster than the sea
 Even the mightiest emperors can't match a tiny ant's worth
 In whose heart has God's immaculate love taken birth

PAURI-TWENTYFOUR

There is no limit to God's unique virtues
 Nor any to their human reckoning
 Beyond all measure is His vast creation
 And endless is His act of giving
 No limit to the spectacles that He stirs
 And infinite are the melodies that He conjures
 No limit to the secrets that His mind bears
 No limit to the creation of unreachable spheres
 Beyond could are those who've vexed to reckon
 But no success has ever been achieved by anyone
 The more certain we are, the greater He's become
 Great is the Lord God, exalted His station
 Still higher than the highest is His Holy Name
 He who must ever venture to know his greatness
 Has to be as great as He, His stature to assess
 He alone knows His greatness, and He Himself can aver
 By His glance of grace, Nanak, He does His blessings shower

PAURI-TWENTYFIVE

Who could assize Lord God's grace
 That matchless Benefactor sans all avarice
 Of Him the world's high and might beg at His door
 Beyond all reckoning remains their staggering number
 How many are ill-fated, sinners, bad men
 Wallowing in evil whose lives sadly lessen
 How many are such who receive but deny
 How many fools and gluttons eat on the sly
 How many are those who forever starve and languish
 But this, too, is a gift, Lord, of Thine own sweet wish
 Willed by Thee is human bondage, and release ordained

Foolish is he who with Thee fault does find
With one blow of fate back he comes to his mind
God alone knows what to give and Himself gives He
Yet a rare one acknowledges this truth gracefully
The boon of His adoration such power brings
As makes His chosen one, Nanak, the King of Kings

PAURI-TWENTYSIX

Priceless are Thy qualities, Thy business is priceless
Priceless are Thy warehouses, and Thy men of business
Priceless are the sellers and buyers in this enterprise
Priceless are Thy rates, and priceless is the merchandise
Priceless is Thy court, and priceless righteousness
Priceless is every measure, and the deal struck priceless
Priceless is Thy benefaction, and priceless Thy seal
Beyond reckoning are Thy Commandments, beyond limit Thy wealth
Without an infinite yardstick the priceless can't be assessed
The meek who do venture are with Thy adoration blessed
On the pages of Holy Books, and through countless inscriptions
Thy glory is set out in discourses, and descriptions
Brahma and Indra of Thy glory ever sing
Sing, too, all the Gopis and their Govind
Isvra praises Thee and so, too, miracle men
And how many Buddhas adore Thee can't be known
Hymns of Thy praise are sung by many a god and demon
And by seers and sages, devotees, and holy men
How many are born to sing of Thy glory
How many have come and gone helplessly
If as many more were to sing Thy praises evermore
No points in Thy reckoning could they ever score
As He wills so His stature grows
Nanak, His secrets only the True One knows
He who claims to know them commits calumny
Mark him not a boor, but a leader of many

PAURI-TWENTYSEVEN

What's His abode like, whence He does His business carry
From where does He oversee and sustain all His creation
Countless melodies are struck of a staggering variety
And countless minstrels always sing in heady elation
Many are the musical measures which praise Thee
With celestial bards singing to the tunes in harmony
Air, water, fire express Thy glory in charming music
Dharmaraja's tunes are also profoundly mystic
Chitra Gupta keeps record of all actions human
For *Dharmaraja* to adjudicate thereon
Sing of Thee *Isar*, *Brahma*, and *Parvati*
All of them created and blessed by Thee
Seated on his throne, Indra bows to Thee in singing
Engrossed in the very midst of many a godling
Miracle men sing of Thee entranced in *Samadhi*
The saints, in singing, fix their thoughts on Thee
The celibate, the virtuous, and the contented—one and all
Pay obeisance to Thee as do the valiant heroes too
Scholars of the Vedas and the great sages extol
Thee, O Lord, age aft age—the ages through
Exalted, too, are Thou by bewitching maids
From heavens, earths, and the nether hades
Praised are Ye by all the gems Thou did create
And so, by the places of pilgrimage, in all sixty-eight
By all the four modes of life-generation
Thy Name is kept in external glorification
All terrestrial regions and celestial spheres
Thou all the cosmos forever reveres
And in so doing are they themselves sustained
They alone have the privilege of singing of Thy glory
Who have first Thy choicest blessings obtained
And thus, deeply steeped abide in the love of Thee

Just how many more, Nanak, also sing of God
 Are beyond my imagination's wildest flight
 He alone is eternal, unchanging Lord
 His Name remains true—beyond all spite
 He has authored all this vast creation, He
 Is, has always been, and forever shall be
 Having created beings of many hues and kinds
 As enchanting *Maya* of supreme physical beauty
 God looks after His grand handiwork, as He minds
 The cosmic business, and sustains it by His gracious decree
 Whatever pleases Him, happens—and has His nod
 King of Kings is the Sole Lord God
 And inviolable is His Edict-Fiat
 Nanak's own life is propped by it

PAURI- TWENTYEIGHT

Wear you the ear-rings of deep contentment
 And make dignity of labour your begging-bowl
 Let meditation be the holy ash to smear your physique
 Make intimation of morality the virgin whole
 And faith in One God the mendicant's staff
 Remember, none of the countless sects is exclusive-unique
 Except that the cult of love is the only true religion
 And triumph over the world is actually a mind self-won
 Ceaseless salutation to Him is a devotee's holy gesture
 Who is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice, Imperishable
 And, in all ages, appear in unchanging vesture

PAURI- TWENTYNINE

Knowledge is out diet, dispensed by compassion
 Divine sound makes music in every breast
 God, the Absolute Master, holds sway o'er all creation
 Worldly riches and miraculous powers have a misleading taste
 Union and separation together run the universal industry
 The balance-sheet of good deeds and evil casts human destiny
 Ceaseless salutation to Him is a devotee's holy gesture
 He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice, Imperishable
 And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI-THIRTY

The Primal Mother in wedlock with Brahma bore
 Three active regents: Creator, Provider, and Destroyer
 As the Lord God wills so He guides them all
 According to His sovereign edict-fiat
 While He watches o'er them, He remains invisible
 Mysterious! Isn't this marvellous act?
 Ceaseless salutations to Him are a devotee's holy gesture
 He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice, Imperishable
 And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI-THIRTYONE

The Lord's seat and His stores in all realms exist
 Inexhaustible are they, though he filled them only once
 He watches o'er all creation as He does persist
 Nanak, just is God's dispensing munificence
 Ceaseless salutations to Him are a devotee's holy gesture
 He is the First Cause, Unhued, Beyond-Voice, Imperishable
 And, in all ages, appears in unchanging vesture

PAURI- THIRTYTWO

Were man's one tongue to multiply into one lakh, and thence
 Become twenty times over as many at that
 Were each tongue to move a hundred thousand times in utterance
 Of God's Holy Name, forever aiming at
 Unrelenting, uninterrupted, devotional remembrance
 Treading this path, he would keep climbing His stairs
 Till his 'self' dissolves into Lord's quintessence
 Tales of saint's glorious ascent won't catch unawares

Even the worms—to follow suit with devotion, thence
Truth is revealed, Nanak, by God's own grace
Though the self-avowed brag of alternative ways

PAURI THIRTY-THREE

Speech can't compel nor silence ever force
Begging doesn't avail nor is giving going to matter
One may choose to live or to death take recourse
Neither rule can succeed nor treasure nor mind's chatter
Nor power can ever dwell in the consciousness
Awakened by knowledge and contemplation
Neither does it abide in the scheming duress
Of accomplished escape from all creation
God alone has the might which from His own hands flow
In His eyes, Nanak, none is high nor any who's low

PAURI-THIRTYFOUR

Nights, seasons, occasions, and days, He made
And air, water, fire, and the nether region
Then, in the midst of them, He Himself laid
Earth—as the mint of righteous action
Where dwell creatures of many a shape and hue
Their names are myriad, their numbers beyond mention
All mortals are judged keeping their deeds in view
True is the Creator, true His holy mansion
There abide The Elect of God divinely charming
There the Lord's gracious glance does His approval confirm
There true from the false is sifted in final reckoning
One's true worth will be known, Nanak, in the world to come

PAURI-THIRTYFIVE

The Realm of Righteous Action abides in the stated way
Next is the Realm of Knowledge which enchants by its working
There many forms of air, water, fire which hold sway
There countless *Krishnas* and *Shivas* have their dwelling
Numberless *Brahmas* are fashioning worlds, et al
Of many a form, colour, and bodily-ware
Many a karmic earth exists, many a mount celestial
Many a sermon is delivered to *Dhruva* out there
Many are the Indras, many the spheres of moons and suns
Many are the continents, and the lands galore
Many are the accomplished yogis, supreme ascetics, enlightened ones
Many are the incarnations of Mother Goddess evermore
Many are the species of gods, demons, celibates
Many are the oceans which gems produce
Many a mode is there, which creatures creates
Many are the languages which they all use
There is many a lineage down which kings descend
Many are God's devotees engrossed in serving him
But none of them, Nanak, knows any end

PAURI-THIRTYSIX

The Realm of Knowledge is where illumination holds sway
And mystic melody reigns amid sublime visions and wonder
Enchanting beauty pervades the Realm of Endeavour
Where matchless forms are forged everyday
So unique is their beauty that it beggars all description
Whoever attempts it would be left speechless, ashamed of his antics
Fashioned in that realm are absorption, wisdom, and mind's illumination
Forged therein are the visions of innumerable gods and mystics

PAURI-THIRTYSEVEN

Might is the hallmark of the Realm of Grace
Where no one lives except heroes of might supreme
An endowment received through constant God-consciousness
Many Sita-like heroines are there of surpassing esteem
Those who are with God in constant communion
Never suffer mortality or anybody's guile
Dwell therein devotees assembled from many a dominion

Cherishing true bliss in their hearts all the while
The Realm of Truth is where God himself reposes
And casts His gracious glance, always watching o'er
That realm houses all the continents and universes
Whose limits nobody can by any means even explore
Abide in that realm all forms of worlds of creation
Untiring a-whirl in submission to His will
God sees them, enjoys them, in divine elation
To describe its limits, Nanak, is a task uphill

PAURI-THIRTYEIGHT

Let continence be the furnace, and patience the goldsmith
Intellect the anvil and knowledge the hammer
God's fear the bellows, austerity's-heat the fire
Fill the vessel of devotion with the Holy Name's nectar
In such a sacred mint forge them the divine Word
They who by His glance are so favour'd
Are in such hallowed task blissfully absorb'd
Only heirs to His grace, Nanak, get this unique award

EPILOGUE

[*Salok/Sloku*]

Air is the spiritual guide, subtle his worth
Water like father sires everything
That's borne by the great mother earth
The whole world plays without tiring
Looked after by day and night: the two nurses
The court of moral law is forever
Taking note of all virtues and vices
Accountable for his own actions is each creature
More by token, some are granted nearness (to You)
Others, who are kept at bay, embroil
Meditation on the Holy Name blesses humans' toil
Their faces glow, Nanak, others with them are liberated, too

ALTERNATIVE RENDERING

EPILOGUE

[*Salok/Sloku*]

Subtle as the air is the path-finder, and water does sire
Everything, borne by Mother Earth, the intellect
Day and night engage this world entire
As male and female nurses, in life's playful act
All virtues and vices are accounted at the Court
Of Cosmic Moral Law, whereby all mortals
On the merit of their deeds, in the divine sport
Move close to, or, away from, His portals
Those, who meditate on the Holy Name, receive God's exclusive benefaction
Deliverance illumines their faces, Nanak, even as they secure others' salvation

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